

## Message Text

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72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02

INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02

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RSR-01 /116 W

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R 201435 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4095

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0554

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MT

SUBJECT: MINTOFF' S DRYDOCKS PROBLEM

REF: VALLETTA 0544

1. SUMMARY: GWU HELD SEVERAL EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OVER LONG WEEKEND ( MARCH 19 A LOCAL HOLIDAY) WITH APPARENT RESULT THAT GWU WILL CONTINUE TO COOPERATE WITH MLP ( READ MINTOFF), GWU REPRESENTATION WILL RESUME PARTICIPATION IN MALTA DRYDOCKS BOARD AND WORKING HOURS TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY LESS THAN PROPOSED BY P. M.

2. AT IMPROMPTU MEETING IN THE YARD MARCH 16, METAL WORKERS SECTION SECRETARY, MIKE SEYCHELL, APPEALED FOR CALM AND ORDER. DESPITE SOME BOOING, WORKERS RETURNED TO WORK.

3. MEETING AT GWU HEADQUARTERS ON MARCH 17 WAS ABORTIVE, REPORTEDLY BECAUSE WORKERS APPEARED IN NUMBERS FAR EXCEEDING CAPACITY OF AUDITORIUM. LARGE CROWDS OF GRUMBLING WORKERS WERE DISPERSED FROM VALLETTA' S MAIN STREET BY POLICE.

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4. MEETING AT GWU HEADQUARTERS ON MARCH 18 ADDRESSED BY GWU PRESIDENT AND OTHER GWU LEADERS WHO AGAIN CALLED FOR CALM AND ORDERLY CONSIDERATION OF PROBLEM AND FOR CONTINUATION CLOSE GWU- MP COOPERATION. IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT DANNY CREMONA, FORMER PRESIDENT OF BOTH THE GWU AND MLP, WOULD ACT AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN GWU AND GOM ( AGAIN READ MINTOFF). SOME WORKERS IN BACH OF HALL ASKED, " WHERE IS ATTARD- KINGSWELL?" ( WHO IS NOW IN BRUSSELS), IMPLYING THAT GWU MIGHT HAVE TAKEN TOUGHER STAND IF HE HAD BEEN PRESENT.

5. SPEAKING AT MARCH 19 MEETING, CREMONA, SUPPORTED BY GWU LEADERSHIP, ANNOUNCED THAT WORKING HOURS WOULD BE FROM 7:30 A. M. TO 3:30 P. M. ON WEEK DAYS, A SUBSTANTIAL REDUCTION FROM MINTOFF' S 7 TO 5 PROPOSAL, AND THAT SATURDAY WORKING HOURS WERE STILL UNDER DISCUSSION. ACCORDING TO GWU PAPERS, SOME WORKERS SHOUTED THAT THEY WOULD VOLUNTEER FOR SATURDAY WORK IF NEED AROSE. SAME PAPERS REPORT THAT CREMONA' S ADDRESS RECEIVED GENERAL ACCLAMATION.

7. GWU LEADERS ECHOED CREMONA, ACCUSED THE NATIONALIST PRESS OF TRYING TO SPLIT THE WORKERS, AND MAINTAINED THAT THE YARD WOULD BE TURNED INTO A PROFITABLE CONCERN SO THAT THE WORKERS WOULD REAP THE FRUIT OF THEIR " BRAVE EFFORT."

8. IN NAZZJON ( NP) POINTS OUT THAT ONLY CONCESSION WAS ON WORKING HOURS AND THAT WAGE LEVELS, OVERTIME WORK, WORK FLEXIBILITY, AND OTHER OUTSTANDING ISSUES STILL TO BE WORKED OUT. IT CALLS FOR MINTOFF TO RESIGN, OR AT LEAST TO KEEP HANDS OFF THE DRYDOCKS.

9. COMMENT: EVENTUAL OUTCOME OF SITUATION WILL LARGELY DEPEND ON RESOLUTION OF REMAINING ISSUES, PARTICULARLY WAGE LEVELS. APPARENTLY THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE WGU AND MLP, HOPED FOR BY THE OPPOSITION NATIONALISTS, HAS NOT MATERIALIZED ALTHOUGH MINTOFF' S PROBLEMS WITH THE DRYDOCKS ARE STILL FAR FROM SOLUTION. EVEN IF SITUATION ULTIMATELY SMOOTHED OVER, MANY SCARS WILL REMAIN.

10. DANNY CREMONA, A FORMER RADICAL FIREBALL, AND VERY CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF MINTOFF, VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED FROM PUBLIC LIFE ABOUT SIX YEARS AGO DUE TO SERIOUS ILLNESS. IN  
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RECENT MONTHS HE HAS AGAIN COME TO PUBLIC NOTICE AS RESULT

OF MINTOFF' S HAVING APPOINTED HIM TO VARIOUS BOARDS, INCLUDING  
THAT OF CENTRAL BANK. HIS REEMERGENCE IN LEADERSHIP  
POSITION AT GWU MEETING PROBABLY A VERY CLEVER MOVE BY  
MINTOFF. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ATTARD- KINGSWELL AND  
LORRY SANT, HE MAY BE THE ONLY MALTESE WITH THE STATURE  
AND THE ABILITY TO COOL THE PRESENT SITUATION. GETZ

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